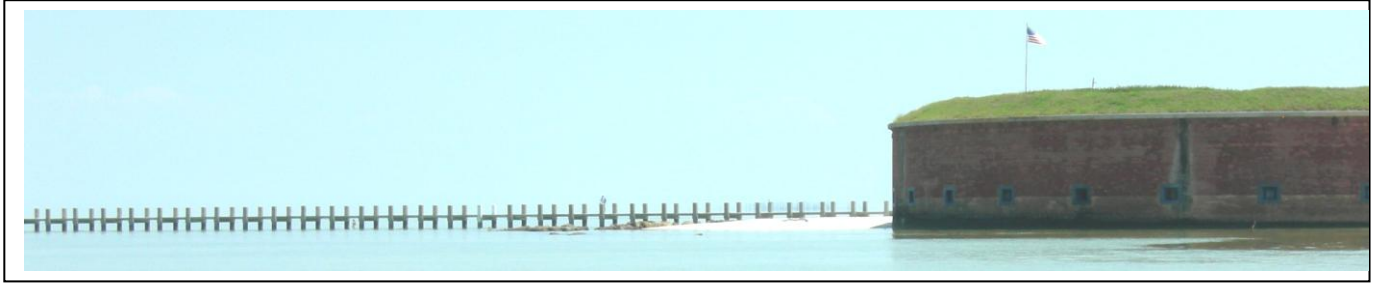


Oil Spill Response

Cultural Resources under Threat

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Biscayne NP, Everglades NP, Dry Tortugas NP,
Big Cypress NP, De Soto NM, Gulf Islands NS,
Jean Lafitte NHP&P, Padre Island NS



The eight National Parks threatened by the oil spill are known not only for their scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, but also the history they hold. The names De Soto, Jean Lafitte and Geronimo, evoke men who brandished their way into history, but all eight parks protect a variety of special places significant to the nation's past.

Archeological Sites & Shipwrecks

Humans have frequented the islands, shorelines and wetlands of the Gulf Coast for thousands of years. They were attracted by the climate, natural harbors and the wealth of wildlife that provided food and other needs. Archeological sites, the remaining evidence of people, are linked to Native Americans, Spanish, French, and finally American explorers and occupants.

Underwater or buried under sand, remnant shipwreck sites rest as silent witnesses to one violent moment in time. Each wreck preserves important archeological evidence of war, trade, and maritime technology from the Spanish Colonial period through World War II. Visiting snorkelers, divers, as well as researchers visit these protected sites.

Coastal Defenses

The United States constructed coastal defenses in an effort to protect the country's extremely lucrative shipping channels and its towns and harbors. While changing military tactics have made these forts obsolete, they provide an important link to our nation's past. In the Gulf, the NPS maintains some of the coastal fortifications that stretch from Fort Jefferson in Florida, nearly 30 years in the making and one of the largest forts ever built, to Ft. Massachusetts in Mississippi, which changed hands in the Civil War. These forts are linked to names like the *USS Maine*, Dr. Mudd, and the Louisiana Native Guards.



Between the eight parks, all of these resources potentially could be affected by the oil spill, due to their location in or near the water. Sites that are under potential threat are being assessed by cultural resource specialists to determine their current conditions and what measures should be used to protect them.
